

## Street Child Makeni: Summary Report

APRIL 2009



### \*\*\* 34 children return to school or vocational training \*\*\*

The first cohort of beneficiaries has been placed back in a school of their choice:

- 12 at Primary Schools
- 19 at Secondary Schools
- 3 at technical and vocational institutions

Each child is provided with schools materials (pens, pencils, books, rulers, bags, uniform, shoes, socks and under vests) and money to pay school fees.

This action has been widely hailed by all in the Makeni community; the parents were extremely happy and grateful, while the beneficiaries were stunned, expressing signs of happiness and bemusement. Having some children walking proudly in their new school uniforms is encouraging other children on the project to follow suit.

### \*\*\* Daily attendance reaches a record high \*\*\*

The daily turnouts of our beneficiaries at the centre reached the highest this month. Throughout April we had a daily attendance spanning 94 – 110 (78% - 92%). This turn-out has largely been as a result of the school support that has seen the earliest reunified children returned to school.

### \*\*\* Successful reunification of 74 beneficiaries \*\*\*

We started this month with a very strong drive to complete the family tracing and reunification process. We have been successful in reunifying 74 beneficiaries in collaboration with MSWGCA (Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.) This has brought the total cases of reunified children to 108.

### Counseling and other activities in the centre

This month we added a new focus to our counseling which included two special group sessions for those beneficiaries preparing to enter the school system. This is in keeping with the promises we made to the schools authorities we visited last month to negotiate the children's return to school. These sessions were mainly on behavioral change, inculcating discipline and hard work, and living with others in the school setting.

There were also general sessions where behavioral change, purposeful living, confidence building and communicating one's feeling were the subjects. These included presentations from the social workers and discussions. The later proved the most effective and the children's minds are slowly but surely being re-conditioned again as they prepare to join their home and school communities.

### \*\*\* The SCoSL team welcome two new members of staff \*\*\*

Abu Sessay, a former social worker of HANCI-SL has been assigned to the tracing and reunification unit alongside Samson Tholley. This is a very positive step and extremely timely with so many family reunifications this month. Richard Dumbuya, another ex-HANCI employee has become a caregiver at the centre, working directly with the children in partnership with the counselors.

### First Meeting with Local Education Authorities

In addition to the five secondary schools we contacted in March we have visited two other secondary schools, two technical and vocational institutions and two primary schools. The focus of these visits is to facilitate the enrollment of our children into these institutions after they have gone through the necessary reintegration. Our staff attended a meeting with teachers, principals and a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to discuss the educational needs of Street Children and how parents can monitor the progress of their child. The meeting successfully resolved educational issues and practical objectives have been drawn up to support beneficiaries at school.

### First Meeting with Law Enforcement Officers

This month saw the first meeting between Police Officers, Law Clerks, Prison Officers, FSU, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, as well as a representative from Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance in order to better understand our collective responsibilities in promoting and protecting the security of our children. The meeting prompted discussion about providing services to street children, the UN minimum rules in the administration of justice to juveniles in conflict and contact with the law, the role of the law enforcement officers in handling street children and protecting children's rights. The outcome was positive with participants wishing to meet at least every quarter of the year. Our aim is to develop a proper framework on how to collaboratively protect the children when they are in conflict with the law.

### Medical

The medical team has adopted the practice of giving health talks to our beneficiaries, adding to the provision of medication and liaising with other health facilitators. This month, the team gave talks on Family Planning (strictly for the girls) on April 7<sup>th</sup> and on Personal Hygiene on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. They discussed the topics to bring out all the necessary details and invited questions afterwards. The children found them very helpful and informative. Treatments in the clinic are ongoing.